(54) Abstract Title
Apparatus and method for allowing connection to a network

(57) An interface apparatus (1) allows for the controlled and chargeable connection of a computer (10) to a network, e.g. to the internet via a service provider (11). The interface (1) has a telephone plug socket (9) to which the computer's modem (12) is connected. It imitates a dial tone, mimics e.g. the service provider of the number dialled by the computer (10), and establishes a connection. An application, such as a browser or E-mail may then launch on the computer (10), and the interface (1) downloads code to be run by the application which requests validation data from the user, such as card information using a card swipe (6), and then validates this data at a validation centre (14) before allowing a direct connection to the service provider (11) for normal access to the network. The validation centre may be a card clearing house, which may bill the user accordingly, or may be a security checking centre. A bank of interfaces may be provided e.g. in a hotel or airport lobby to allow e.g. laptop users to connect to the internet, an intranet or some other network.
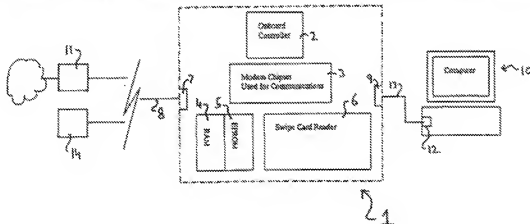
Fig 1

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